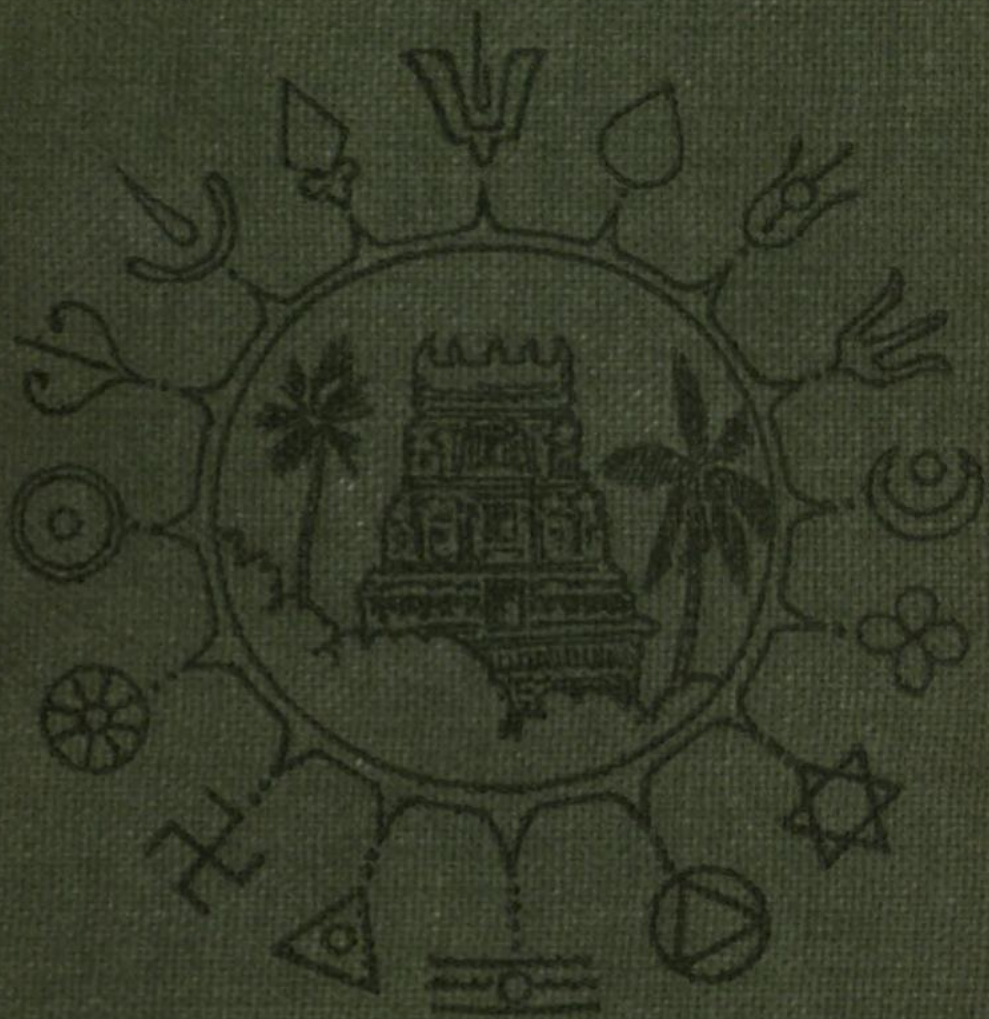
CASTES AND TRIBES of SOUTHERN INDIA



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of them servants in the Rāja's palace. Whence they are also called Manimakkalu. They all call themselves Ghōrpades, and members of the Rāja's (the Kansika) gōtra. They thus cannot intermarry among themselves, but occasionally their girls are married to Kunbis. Their women are in no way gōsha." *

The cranial type of the Marāthas is, as shown by the following table, like that of the Canarese, mesaticephalic or sub-brachycephalic :—

——	——	Cephalic Av.	Index Max.
Canarese	50 Holeyas	79·1	87·4
Marāthi	30 Rangāris	79·8	92·2
Canarese	50 Vakkaligas	81·7	93·8
Marāthi	30 Suka Sālēs	81·8	88·2
Marāthi	30 Sukun Sālēs	82·2	84·4

Maravan.—"The Maravans," Mr. H. A. Stuart writes,† "are found chiefly in Madura and Tinnevelly, where they occupy the tracts bordering on the coast from Cape Comorin to the northern limits of the Rāmnād zemindari. The proprietors of that estate, and of the great Sivaganga zemindari, are both of this caste. The Maravars must have been one of the first of the Dravidian tribes that penetrated to the south of the peninsula, and, like the Kallans, they have been but little affected by Brāhmanical influence. There exists among them a picturesque tradition to the effect that, in consequence of their assisting Rāma in his war against the demon Rāvana, that deity gratefully exclaimed in

* Gazetteer of the Bellary district. † Madras Census Report, 1891.

good Tamil Maravēn, or I will never forget, and that they have ever since been called Maravans. But, with more probability, the name may be connected with the word maram, which means killing, ferocity, bravery and the like, as pointing clearly to their unpleasant profession, that of robbing and slaying their neighbours. In former days they were a fierce and turbulent race, famous for their military prowess. At one time they temporarily held possession of the Pāndya kingdom, and, at a later date, their armies gave valuable assistance to Tirumala Nayakkan. They gave the British much trouble at the end of last (eighteenth) century and the beginning of this (nineteenth) century, but they are now much the same as other ryots (cultivators), though perhaps somewhat more bold and lawless. Agamudaiyan and Kallan are returned as sub-divisions by a comparatively large number of persons. Maravan is also found among the sub-divisions of Kallan, and there can be little doubt that there is a very close connection between Kallans, Maravans, and Agamudaiyans." This connection is dealt with in the article on the Kallans. But I may here quote the following legend relating thereto. "Once upon a time, Rishi Gautama left his house to go abroad on business. Dēvendra, taking advantage of his absence, debauched his wife, and three children were the result. When the Rishi returned, one of the three hid himself behind a door, and, as he thus acted like a thief, he was henceforward called Kallan. Another got up a tree, and was therefore called Maravan from maram, a tree, whilst the third brazened it out, and stood his ground, thus earning for himself the name of Ahamudeiyan, or the possessor of pride. This name was corrupted into Ahambadiyan."*

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* Madras Review, 1899.

"Some say the word Maravan is derived from marani, sin; a Maravan being one who commits sin by killing living creatures without feeling pity, and without fear of god." *

The Maravans claim descent from Guha or Kuha, Rāma's boatman, who rowed him across to Ceylon. According to the legend, Rāma promised Guha that he would come back at a fixed time. When he failed to return, Guha made a fire, whereon to burn himself to death. Hanumān, however, prevented him from committing suicide, and assured him that Rāma would shortly return. This came to pass, and Rāma, on learning what Guha had done, called him Maravan, a brave or reckless fellow. According to another legend, the god Indra, having become enamoured of Ahalya, set out one night to visit her in the form of a crow, and, seating himself outside the dwelling of the Rishi her husband, cawed loudly. The Rishi, believing that it was dawn, went off to bathe, while Indra, assuming the form of her husband, went in to the woman, and satisfied his desire. When her husband reached the river, there were no signs of dawn, and he was much perturbed, but not for long, as his supernatural knowledge revealed to him how he had been beguiled, and he proceeded to curse Indra and his innocent wife. Indra was condemned to have a thousand female organs of generation all over his body, and the woman was turned into a stone. Indra repented, and the Rishi modified his disfigurement by arranging that, to the onlooker, he would seem to be clothed or covered with eyes, and the woman was allowed to resume her feminine form when Rāma, in the course of his wanderings, should tread on her. The

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* E. Fawcett, Journ. Anthrop. Inst. XXXIII. 1903.

result of Indra's escapade was a son, who was stowed away in a secret place (maravuidam). Hence his descendants are known as Maravan.*

The head of the Maravans is the Sētupati (lord of the bridge), or Rāja of Rāmnād. "The Sethupati line, or Marava dynasty of Rāmnād," the Rev. J. E. Tracy writes,† "claims great antiquity. According to popular legendary accounts, it had its rise in the time of the great Rāma himself, who is said to have appointed, on his victorious return from Lanka (Ceylon), seven guardians of the passage or bridge connecting Ceylon with the mainland . . . . Another supposition places the rise of the family in the second or third century B.C. It rests its case principally upon a statement in the Mahāwanso, according to which the last of the three Tamil invasions of Ceylon, which took place in the second or third century B.C., was under the leadership of seven chieftains, who are supposed, owing to the silence of the Pāndyan records on the subject of South Indian dealings with Ceylon, to have been neither Chēras, Chōlas, or Pāndyans, but mere local adventurers, whose territorial proximity and marauding ambition had tempted them to the undertaking . . . . Another supposition places the rise of the family in the eleventh or twelfth century A.D. There are two statements of this case, differing according to the source from which they come. According to the one, which has its source in South India, the rise of the family took place in or about 1059 A.D., when Rāja Rāja, the Chōla king, upon his invasion of Ceylon, appointed princes whom he knew to be loyal to himself, and who, according to some, had aided him in his conquest of all Pāndya, to act as guardians of the

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* E. Fawcett, *loc. cit.* † Madras Journ. Lit. Science, 1899.

passage by which his armies must cross to and fro, and supplies be received from the mainland. According to the other statement, which has its source in Sinhalese records, the family took its rise from the appointment of Parākrama Bahu's General Lankapura, who, according to a very trustworthy Sinhalese epitome of the Mahāwanso, after conquering Pāndya, remained some time at Ramespuram, building a temple there, and, while on the island, struck kahapanas (coins similar to those of the Sinhalese series). Whichever of these statements we may accept, the facts seem to point to the rise of the family in the eleventh or twelfth century A.D., and inscriptions quoted from Dr. Burgess by Mr. Robert Sewell* show that grants were made by Sethupati princes in 1414, again in 1489, still again in 1500, and finally as late as 1540. These bring the line down to within two generations of the time when Muttu Krishnappa Nayakka is said, in 1604, to have found affairs sadly disordered in the Marava country, and to have re-established the old family in the person of Sadaiyaka Tēvar Udaiyar Sethupati. The coins of the Sethupatis divide themselves into an earlier and later series. The earlier series present specimens which are usually larger and better executed, and correspond in weight and appearance very nearly to the well-known coins of the Sinhalese series, together with which they are often found. 'These coins,' Rhys Davids writes, † 'are probably the very ones referred to as having been struck by Parākrama's General Lankapura.' The coins of the later series are very rude in device and execution. The one face shows only the Tamil legend of the word Sethupati, while the other side is taken up with various devices."

* Sketch of the Dynasties of South India.

A poet, in days of old, refers to "the wrathful and furious Maravar, whose curled beards resemble the twisted horns of the stag, the loud twang of whose powerful bowstrings, and the stirring sound of whose double-headed drums, compel even kings at the head of large armies to turn their back and fly." * The Maravans are further described as follows. "Of strong limbs and hardy frames, and fierce looking as tigers, wearing long and curled locks of hair, the blood-thirsty Maravans, armed with the bow bound with leather, ever ready to injure others, shoot their arrows at poor and defenceless travellers, from whom they can steal nothing, only to feast their eyes on the quivering limbs of their victims." † In a note on the Maravans of the Tinnevelly district, it is recorded ‡ that "to this class belonged most of the Poligars, or feudal chieftains, who disputed with the English the possession of Tinnevelly during the last, and first years of the present (nineteenth) century. As feudal chiefs and heads of a numerous class of the population, and one whose characteristics were eminently adapted for the roll of followers of a turbulent chieftain, bold, active, enterprising, cunning and capricious, this class constituted themselves, or were constituted by the peaceful cultivators, their protectors in time of bloodshed and rapine, when no central authority, capable of keeping the peace, existed. Hence arose the systems of Dēsha and Stalum Kāval, or the guard of a tract of country comprising a number of villages against open marauders in armed bands, and the guard of separate villages, their houses and crops, against secret theft. The feudal chief received a contribution from the area around his fort in

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* Kalith-thokai.

† Kanakasabhai Pillai. The Tamils Eighteen Hundred Years ago. 1904.

‡ Manual of the Tinnevelly district. 1879.

consideration of protection afforded against armed invasion. The Maravars are chiefly the agricultural servants or sub-tenants of the wealthier ryots, under whom they cultivate, receiving a share of the crop. An increasing proportion of this caste are becoming the ryotwari owners of land by purchase from the original holders."

Though the Maravans, Mr. Francis writes,* "are usually cultivators, they are some of them the most expert cattle-lifters in the Presidency. In Madura they have a particularly ingenious method of removing cattle. The actual thief steals the bullocks at night, and drives them at a gallop for half a dozen miles, hands them over to a confederate, and then returns and establishes an *alibi*. The confederate takes them on another stage, and does the same. A third and a fourth man keep them moving all that night. The next day they are hidden and rested, and thereafter they are driven by easier stages to the hills north of Madura, where their horns are cut and their brands altered, to prevent them from being recognised. They are then often sold at the great Chittrai cattle fair in Madura town. In some papers read in G.O., No. 535, Judicial, dated 29th March 1899, it was shown that, though, according to the 1891 census, the Maravans formed only 10 per cent. of the population of the district of Tinnevelly, yet they had committed 70 per cent. of the dacoities which have occurred in that district in the previous five years. They have recently (1899) figured prominently in the anti-Shānār riots in the same district." (*See* Shānān.)

"The Maravans," Mr. F. S. Mullaly writes,† "furnish nearly the whole of the village police (kāvilgars, watchmen), robbers and thieves of the Tinnevelly district.

* Madras Census Report, 1901.

Very often the thief and the watchman are one and the same individual. The Maravans of the present time, of course, retain only a shadow of the power which their ancestors wielded under the poligars, who commenced the kavil system. Still the Marava of to-day, as a member of a caste which is numerous and influential, as a man of superior physique and bold independent spirit, thief and robber, village policeman and detective combined—is an immense power in the land."

It is noted, in the Madras Police Report, 1903, that "a large section of the population in Tinnevelly—the Maravans—are criminal by predilection and training. Mr. Longden's efforts have been directed to the suppression of a bad old custom, by which the police were in the habit of engaging the help of the Maravans themselves in the detection of crime. The natural result was a mass of false evidence and false charges, and, worst of all, a police indebted to the Maravan, who was certain to have his *quid pro quo*. This method being discountenanced, and the station-house officer being deprived of the aid of his tuppans (men who provide a clue), the former has found himself very much at sea, and, until sounder methods can be inculcated, will fail to show successful results. Still, even a failure to detect is better than a police in the hands of the Maravans." Further information concerning tuppukuli, or clue hire, will be found in the note on Kallans.

From a very interesting note on the Maravans of the Tinnevelly district, the following extract is taken.* "On the principle of setting a thief to catch a thief, Maravars are paid blackmail to keep their hands from picking and stealing, and to make restitution for any thefts that may

* Tinnevelly, being an account of the district, the people, and the missions. Mission Field, 1897.

possibly take place, notwithstanding the vigilance of the watchmen. (A suit has been known to be instituted, in a Munsiff's Court, for failure to make restitution for theft after receipt of the kudikāval money.) As a matter of fact, no robberies on a large scale can possibly take place without the knowledge, connivance, or actual co-operation of the Kavalgars. People living in country places, remote from towns, are entirely at the mercy of the Maravars, and every householder or occupier of a mud hut, which is dignified by being called a house, must pay the Maravars half a fanam, which is equal to one anna eight pies, yearly. Those who own cattle, and there are few who do not, must pay one fanam a year. At the time of the harvest, it is the custom in Southern India for an enemy to go and reap his antagonist's crops as they are growing in the fields. He does this to bring matters to a climax, and to get the right side of his enemy, so that he may be forced to come to terms, reasonable or otherwise. Possession is nine points of the law. On occasions such as these, which are frequent, the advantage of the employment of Kavalgars can readily be understood. The Maravars are often true to their salt, though sometimes their services can be obtained by the highest bidder. The plan of keeping kaval, or going the rounds like a policeman on duty, is, for a village of, say, a hundred Maravars, to divide into ten sections. Each section takes a particular duty, and they are paid by the people living within their range. If a robbery takes place, and the value of the property does not exceed ten rupees, then this section of ten men will each subscribe one rupee, and pay up ten rupees. If, however, the property lost exceeds the sum of ten rupees, then all the ten sections of Maravars, the hundred men, will join together, and make restitution for the robbery. How

they are able to do this, and to recoup themselves, can be imagined. Various attempts for many years have been made to put a stop to this system of kudi-kaval. At one time the village (Nunguneri) of the chief Maravar was burnt down, and for many years the police have been on their track, and numerous convictions are constantly taking place. Out of 150,000 Maravars in the whole district, 10,000 are professional thieves, and of these 4,000 have been convicted, and are living at the present time. The question arises whether some plan could not be devised to make honest men of these rogues. It has been suggested that their occupation as watchmen should be recognised by Government, and that they should be enlisted as subordinate officials, just as some of them are now employed as Talayaris and Vettiyans . . . . The villages of the Maravars exist side by side with the other castes, and, as boys and girls, all the different classes grow up together, so that there is a bond of sympathy and regard between them all. The Maravans, therefore, are not regarded as marauding thieves by the other classes. Their position in the community as Kavalgars is recognised, and no one actually fears them. From time immemorial it has been the mamool (custom) to pay them certain dues, and, although illegal, who in India is prepared to act contrary to custom? The small sum paid annually by the villagers is insignificant, and no one considers it a hardship to pay it, when he knows that his goods are in safety; and, if the Maravars did not steal, there are plenty of other roving castes (*e.g.*, the Kuluvars, Kuravars, and Kambalatars) who would, so that, on the whole, ordinary unsophisticated natives, who dwell in the country side, rather like the Maravar than otherwise. When, however, these watchmen undertake torchlight

dacoities, and attack travellers on the high-road, then they are no better than the professional thieves of other countries, and they deserve as little consideration. It must be borne in mind that, while robbery is the hereditary occupation of the Maravars, there are thousands of them who lead strictly honest, upright lives as husbandmen, and who receive no benefit whatever from the kudi-kaval system. Some of the most noted and earnest Native Christians have been, and still are, men and women of this caste, and the reason seems to be that they never do things by halves. If they are murderers and robbers, nothing daunts them, and, on the other hand, if they are honest men, they are the salt of the earth." I am informed that, when a Maravan takes food in the house of a stranger, he will sometimes take a pinch of earth, and put it on the food before he commences his meal. This act frees him from the obligation not to injure the family which has entertained him.

In a note entitled Marava jāti vernanam,* from the Mackenzie Manuscripts, it is recorded that "there are seven sub-divisions in the tribe of the Maravas, respectively denominated Sembunāttu, Agattha, Oru-nāttu, Upukatti, and Kurichikattu. Among these sub-divisions, that of the Sembunāttu Maravas is the principal one." In the Madras Census Report, 1891, the following are returned as the most important sub-divisions :— Agamudaiyan, Kallan, Kārana, Kondaikatti, Kottāni, Sembanāttu, and Vannikutti. Among the Sembanāttus (or Sembanādus), the following septs or khilais have been recorded :—

Marikka.	Thanicha.
Piccha.	Karuputhra.
Tondamān.	Katrā.
Sītrama.	

* Madras Journ. Lit. Science, IV, 1836.

"The Kondayamkottai Maravars," Mr. F. Fawcett writes,* "are divided into six sub-tribes, or, as they call them, trees. Each tree, or kothu, is divided into three khilais or branches. These I call septs. Those of the khilais belonging to the same tree or kothu are never allowed to intermarry. A man or woman must marry with one of a khilai belonging to another tree than his own, his or her own being that of his or her mother, and not of the father. But marriage is not permissible between those of any two trees or kothus: there are some restrictions. For instance, a branch of betel vine or leaves may marry with a branch of cocoanut, but not with areca nuts or dates. I am not positive what all the restrictions are, but restrictions of some kind, by which marriage between persons of all trees may not be made indiscriminately, certainly exist. The names of the trees or kothus and of the khilais or branches, as given to me from the Maraver Pādel, a book considered to be authoritative, are these—

Tree.	Kothu.	Khilai.
Milaku	Pepper vine ...	Viramudithanginan. Sedhar. Semanda.
Vettile	Betel vine	Agastyar. Maruvidu. Alakhiya Pandiyan.
Thennang ...	Cocoanut	Vaniyan. Vettuvan. Nataivendar.
Komukham ...	Areca nut	Kelnambhi. Anbutran. Gautaman.
Ichang	Dates	Sadachi. Sangaran. Pichipillai.
Panang	Palmyra	Akhili. Lokhamurti. Jambhuvar.

* Journ. Anthrop. Inst., XXXIII, 1903.

"Unfortunately I am unable to trace out the meanings of all these khilais. Agastya and Gautamar are, of course, sages of old. Viramudithanginan seems to mean a king's crown-bearer. Alakhiya Pandiyan seems to be one of the old Pandiyan kings of Madura (alakhiya means beautiful). Akhili is perhaps intended to mean the wife of Gautama, Lokamurti, the one being of the world, and Jambhuvar, a monkey king with a bear's face, who lived long, long ago. The common rule regulating marriages among Brāhmans, and indeed people of almost every caste in Southern India, is that the proper husband for the girl is her mother's brother or his son. But this is not so among the Kondayam-kottai Maravars. A girl can never marry her mother's brother, because they are of the same khilai. On the other hand, the children of a brother and sister may marry, and should do so, if this can be arranged, as, though the brother and sister are of the same khilai, their children are not, because the children of the brother belong perforce to that of their mother, who is of a different khilai. It very often happens that a man marries into his father's khilai; indeed there seems to be some idea that he should do so if possible. The children of brothers may not marry with each other, although they are of different khilais, for two brothers may not marry into the same khilai. One of the first things to be done in connection with a marriage is that the female relations of the bride-groom must go and examine the intended bride, to test her physical suitability. She should not, as it was explained to me, have a flat foot; the calf of her leg should be slender, not so thick as the thigh; the skin on the throat should not form more than two wrinkles; the hair over the temple should grow

crossways. The last is very important." A curl on the forehead resembling the head of a snake is of evil omen.

In one form of the marriage rites as carried out by the Maravans, the bridegroom's party proceed, on an auspicious day which has been fixed beforehand, to the home of the bride, taking with them five cocoanuts, five bunches of plantains, five pieces of turmeric, betel, and flowers, and the tāli strung on a thread dyed with turmeric. At the auspicious hour, the bride is seated within the house on a plank, facing east. The bridegroom's sister removes the string of black beads from her neck, and ties the tāli thereon. While this is being done, the conch-shell is blown, and women indulge in what Mr. Fawcett describes as a shrill kind of keening (kulavi idal). The bride is taken to the house of the bridegroom, where they sit side by side on a plank, and the ceremony of warding off the evil eye is performed. Further, milk is poured by people with crossed hands over the heads of the couple. A feast is held, in which meat takes a prominent part. A Maravan, who was asked to describe the marriage ceremony, replied that it consists in killing a sheep or fowl, and the bringing of the bride by the bridegroom's sister to her brother's house after the tāli has been tied. The Kondaikatti Maravans, in some places, substitute for the usual golden tāli a token representing "the head of Indra fastened to a bunch of human hair, or silken strings representing his hair." *

In another form of the marriage ceremony, the father of the bridegroom goes to the bride's house,

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* F. Fawcett, *loc. cit.*

accompanied by his relations, with the following articles in a box made of plaited palmyra leaves :—

5 bundles of betel.
21 measures of rice.
7 cocoanuts.
70 plantains.
7 lumps of jaggery (crude sugar).
21 pieces of turmeric.
Flowers, sandal paste, etc.

At the bride's house, these presents are touched by those assembled there, and the box is handed over to the bride's father. On the wedding day (which is four days afterwards), pongal (cooked rice) is offered to the house god early in the morning. Later in the day, the bridegroom is taken in a palanquin to the house of the bride. Betel is presented to him by her father or brother. The bride generally remains within the house till the time for tying the tāli has arrived. The maternal uncle then blindfolds her with his hand, lifts her up, and carries her to the bridegroom. Four women stand round the contracting couple, and pass round a dish containing a broken cocoanut and a cake three times. The bride and bridegroom then spit into the dish, and the females set up their shrill keening. The maternal uncles join their hands together, and, on receiving the assent of those present, the bridegroom's sister ties the tāli on the bride's neck. The tāli consists of a ring attached to a black silk thread. After marriage, the "silk tāli" is, for every day purposes, replaced by golden beads strung on a string, and the tāli used at the wedding is often borrowed for the occasion. The tāli having been tied, the pair are blessed, and, in some places, their knees, shoulders, heads, and backs are touched with a betel leaf dipped in milk, and blessed with the words "May the pair be prosperous, giving rise to leaves like a banyan tree, roots like the thurvi (*Cynodon Dactylon*) grass, and like the bamboo." Of

the thurvi grass it is said in the Atharwana Vēda "May this grass, which rose from the water of life, which has a hundred roots and a hundred stems, efface a hundred of my sins, and prolong my existence on earth for a hundred years."

Still further variants of the marriage ceremonial are described by Mr. Fawcett, in one of which "the Brāhman priest (purōhit) hands the tāli to the bridegroom's sister, who in turn hands it to the bridegroom, who ties a knot in it. The sister then ties two more knots in it, and puts it round the bride's neck. After this has been done, and while the pair are still seated, the Brāhman ties together the little fingers of the right hands of the pair, which are interlocked, with a silken thread. The pair then rise, walk thrice round the marriage seat (manavanai), and enter the house, where they sit, and the bridegroom receives present from the bride's father. The fingers are then untied. While undergoing the ceremony, the bridegroom wears a thread smeared with turmeric tied round the right wrist. It is called kappu."

In the manuscript already quoted,* it is noted that "should it so happen, either in the case of wealthy rulers of districts or of poorer common people, that any impediment arises to prevent the complete celebration of the marriage with all attendant ceremonies according to the sacred books and customs of the tribe, then the tāli only is sent, and the female is brought to the house of her husband. At a subsequent period, even after two or three children have been born, the husband sends the usual summons to a marriage of areca nut and betel leaf; and, when the relatives are assembled, the bride

* Madras Journ. Lit. Science, IV, 1836.

and bridegroom are publicly seated in state under the marriage pandal; the want of completeness in the former contract is made up; and, all needful ceremonies being gone through, they perform the public procession through the streets of the town, when they break the cocoanut in the presence of Vignēsvara (Ganēsa), and, according to the means possessed by the parties, the celebration of the marriage is concluded in one day, or prolonged to two, three or four days. The tāli, being tied on, has the name of katu tāli, and the name of the last ceremony is called the removal of the former deficiency. If it so happen that, after the first ceremony, the second be not performed, then the children of such an alliance are lightly regarded among the Maravas. Should the husband die during the continuance of the first relation, and before the second ceremony be performed, then the body of the man, and also the woman are placed upon the same seat, and the ceremonies of the second marriage, according to the customs of the tribe, being gone through, the tāli is taken off; the woman is considered to be a widow, and can marry with some other man." It is further recorded * of the Orunāttu Maravans that "the elder or younger sister of the bridegroom goes to the house of the bride, and, to the sound of the conch-shell, ties on the tāli; and, early on the following morning, brings her to the house of the bridegroom. After some time, occasionally three or four years, when there are indications of offspring, in the fourth or fifth month, the relatives of the pair assemble, and perform the ceremony of removing the deficiency; placing the man and his wife on a seat in public, and having the sacrifice by fire and other matters conducted by the Prōhitan (or Brāhman);

* Madras Journ. Lit. Science, IV, 1836.

after which the relatives sprinkle seshai rice (or rice beaten out without any application of water) over the heads of the pair. The relatives are feasted and otherwise hospitably entertained; and these in return bestow donations on the pair, from one fanam to one pagoda. The marriage is then finished. Sometimes, when money for expenses is wanting, this wedding ceremony is postponed till after the birth of two or three children. If the first husband dies, another marriage is customary. Should it so happen that the husband, after the tying on of the tāli in the first instance, dislikes the object of his former choice, then the people of their tribe are assembled; she is conducted back to her mother's house; sheep, oxen, eating-plate, with brass cup, jewels, ornaments, and whatever else she may have brought with her from her mother's house, are returned; and the tāli, which was put on, is broken off and taken away. If the wife dislikes the husband, then the money he paid, the expenses which he incurred in the wedding, the tāli which he caused to be bound on her, are restored to him, and the woman, taking whatsoever she brought with her, returns to her mother's house, and marries again at her pleasure."

It is recorded, in the Madras Census Report, 1891, that "a special custom obtaining among the Marava zemindars of Tinnevelly is mentioned by the Registrar of that district. It is the celebration of marriage by means of a proxy for the bridegroom in the shape of a stick, which is sent by the bridegroom, and is set up in the marriage booth in his place. The tāli is tied by some one representative of the bridegroom, and the marriage ceremony then becomes complete . . . . Widow re-marriage is freely allowed and practiced, except in the Sembunāttu sub-division." "A widow,"

Mr. Fawcett writes, "may marry her deceased husband's elder brother, but not a younger brother. If she does not like him, she may marry some one else."

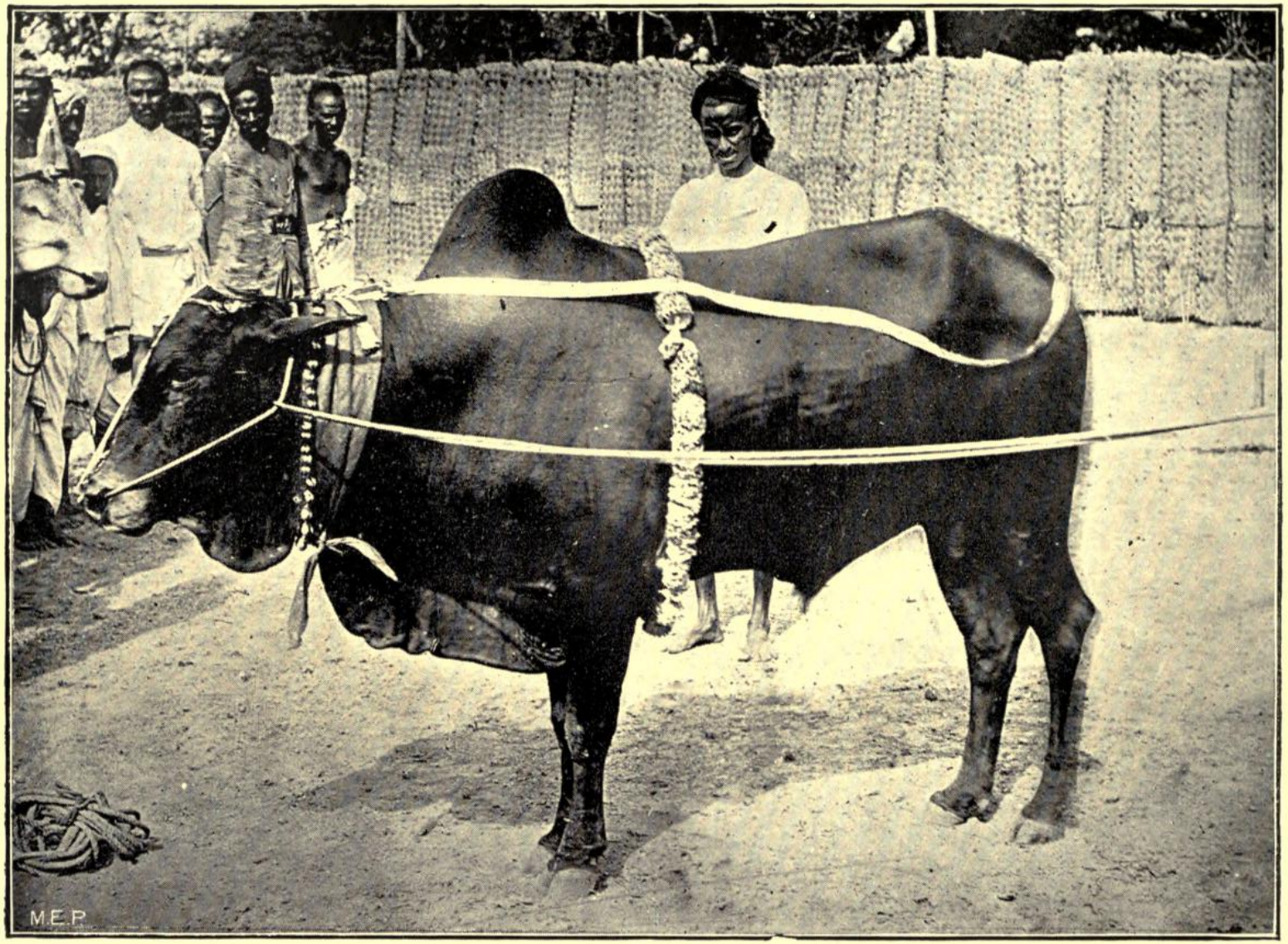
When a girl reaches puberty, news of the event is conveyed by a washerman. On the sixteenth day she comes out of seclusion, bathes, and returns home. At the threshold, her future husband's sister is standing, and averts the evil eye by waving betel leaves, plantains, cocoanuts, cooked flour paste (puttu), a vessel filled with water, and an iron measure containing rice with a style (ambu) stuck in it. The style is removed by the girl's prospective sister-in-law, who beats her with it as she enters the house. A feast is held at the expense of the girl's maternal uncle, who brings a goat, and ties it to a pole at her house.

Both burial and cremation are practiced by the Maravans. The Sembunāttu Maravans of Rāmnād regard the Agamudaiyans as their servants, and the water, with which the corpse is washed, is brought by them. Further, it is an Agamudaiyan, and not the son of the deceased, who carries the fire-pot to the burial-ground. The corpse is carried thither on a bier or palanquin. The grave is dug by an Āndi, never by a Pallan or Paraiyan. Salt, powdered brick, and sacred ashes are placed on the floor thereof, and the corpse is placed in it in a sitting posture. The Kondaiyamkottai Maravans of Rāmnād, who are stone and brick masons, burn their dead, and, on their way to the burning-ground, the bearers of the corpse walk over cloths spread on the ground. On the second or third day, lingams are made out of the ashes, or of mud from the grave if the corpse has been buried. To these, as well as to the soul of the deceased, and to the crows, offerings are made. On the sixteenth day,

nine kinds of seed-grain are placed over the grave, or the spot where the corpse was burnt. A Pandāram sets up five kalasams (brass vessels), and does pūja (worship). The son of the deceased, who officiated as chief mourner, goes to a Pillayar (Ganēsa) shrine, carrying on his head a pot containing a lighted lamp made of flour. As he draws near the god, a screen is stretched in front thereof. He then takes a few steps backwards, the screen is removed, and he worships the god. He then retires, walking backwards. The flour is distributed among those present. Presents of new cloths are made to the sons and daughters of the deceased. In his account of the Kondaiyamkottai Maravans, Mr. Fawcett gives the following account of the funeral rites. "Sandals having been fastened on the feet, the corpse is carried in a recumbent position, legs first, to the place of cremation. A little rice is placed in the mouth, and the relatives put a little money into a small vessel which is kept beside the chest. The karma karta (chief mourner) walks thrice round the corpse, carrying an earthen vessel filled with water, in which two or three holes are pierced. He allows some water to fall on the corpse, and breaks the pot near the head, which lies to the south. No Brāhman attends this part of the ceremony. When he has broken the pot, the karma karta must not see the corpse again; he goes away at once, and is completely shaved. The barber takes the cash which has been collected, and lights the pyre. When he returns to the house, the karma karta prostrates himself before a lighted lamp; he partakes of no food, except a little grain and boiled pulse and water, boiled with coarse palm sugar and ginger. Next day he goes to the place of cremation, picks up such calcined bones as he finds, and places them in a basket, so that he may some day throw them in

water which is considered to be sacred. On the eleventh or twelfth day, some grain is sown in two new earthen vessels which have been broken, and there is continued weeping around these. On the sixteenth day, the young plants, which have sprouted, are removed, and put into water, weeping going on all the while; and, after this has been done, the relatives bathe and enjoy a festive meal, after which the karma karta is seated on a white cloth, and is presented with a new cloth and some money by his father-in-law and other relatives who are present. On the seventeenth day takes place the punyaga-vachanam or purification, at which the Brāhman priest presides, and the karma karta takes an oil bath. The wood of the pīpal tree (*Ficus religiosa*) is never used for purposes of cremation."

Concerning the death ceremonies in the Trichinopoly district, Mr. F. R. Hemingway writes as follows. "Before the corpse is removed, the chief mourner and his wife take two balls of cow-dung, in which the barber has mixed various kinds of grain, and stick them on to the wall of the house. These are thrown into water on the eighth day. The ceremonial is called pattam kattugiradu, or investing with the title, and indicates the succession to the dead man's estate. A rocket is fired when the corpse is taken out of the house. On the sixth day, a pandal (booth) of nāval (*Eugenia Jambolana*) leaves is prepared, and offerings are made in it to the manes of the ancestors of the family. It is removed on the eighth day, and the chief mourner puts a turban on, and merry-making and dances are indulged in. There are ordinarily no karumāntaram ceremonies, but they are sometimes performed on the sixteenth day, a Brāhman being called in. On the return home from these ceremonies, each member of the party has to dip his toe



JALLIKATTU BULL.

into a mortar full of cow-dung water, and the last man has to knock it down."

Among some Kondaiyamkottai Maravans, a ceremony called palaya karmāndhiram, or old death ceremony, is performed. Some months after the death of one who has died an unnatural death, the skull is exhumed, and placed beneath a pandal (booth) in an open space near the village. Libations of toddy are indulged in, and the villagers dance wildly round the head. The ceremony lasts over three days, and the final death ceremonies are then performed.

For the following account of the jellikattu or bull-baiting, which is practiced by the Maravans, I am indebted to a note by Mr. J. H. Nelson.* "This," he writes, "is a game worthy of a bold and free people, and it is to be regretted that certain Collectors (District Magistrates) should have discouraged it under the idea that it was somewhat dangerous. The jellikattu is conducted in the following manner. On a certain day in the year, large crowds of people, chiefly males, assemble together in the morning in some extensive open space, the dry bed of a river perhaps, or of a tank (pond), and many of them may be seen leading ploughing bullocks, of which the sleek bodies and rather wicked eyes afford clear evidence of the extra diet they have received for some days in anticipation of the great event. The owners of these animals soon begin to brag of their strength and speed, and to challenge all and any to catch and hold them; and in a short time one of the best beasts is selected to open the day's proceedings. A new cloth is made fast round his horns, to be the prize of his captor, and he is then led

* Manual of the Madura district.

out into the midst of the arena by his owner, and there left to himself surrounded by a throng of shouting and excited strangers. Unaccustomed to this sort of treatment, and excited by the gestures of those who have undertaken to catch him, the bullock usually lowers his head at once, and charges wildly into the midst of the crowd, who nimbly run off on either side to make way for him. His speed being much greater than that of the men, he soon overtakes one of his enemies and makes at him to toss him savagely. Upon this the man drops on the sand like a stone, and the bullock, instead of goring him, leaps over his body, and rushes after another. The second man drops in his turn, and is passed like the first ; and, after repeating this operation several times, the beast either succeeds in breaking the ring, and galloping off to his village, charging every person he meets on the way, or is at last caught and held by the most vigorous of his pursuers. Strange as it may seem, the bullocks never by any chance toss or gore any one who throws himself down on their approach ; and the only danger arises from their accidentally reaching unseen and unheard some one who remains standing. After the first two or three animals have been let loose one after the other, two or three, or even half a dozen are let loose at a time, and the scene quickly becomes most exciting. The crowd sways violently to and fro in various directions in frantic efforts to escape being knocked over ; the air is filled with shouts, screams, and laughter ; and the bullocks thunder over the plain as fiercely as if blood and slaughter were their sole occupation. In this way perhaps two or three hundred animals are run in the course of a day, and, when all go home towards evening, a few cuts and bruises, borne with the utmost cheerfulness,

are the only results of an amusement which requires great courage and agility on the part of the competitors for the prizes—that is for the cloths and other things tied to the bullocks' horns—and not a little on the part of the mere bystanders. The only time I saw this sport (from a place of safety) I was highly delighted with the entertainment, and no accident occurred to mar my pleasure. One man indeed was slightly wounded in the buttock, but he was quite able to walk, and seemed to be as happy as his friends."

A further account of the jallikat or jellicut is given in the Gazetteer of the Madura district. "The word jallikattu literally means tying of ornaments. On a day fixed and advertised by beat of drums at the adjacent weekly markets, a number of cattle, to the horns of which cloths and handkerchiefs have been tied, are loosed one after the other, in quick succession, from a large pen or other enclosure, amid a furious tom-tomming and loud shouts from the crowd of assembled spectators. The animals have first to run the gauntlet down a long lane formed of country carts, and then gallop off wildly in every direction. The game consists in endeavouring to capture the cloths tied to their horns. To do this requires fleetness of foot and considerable pluck, and those who are successful are the heroes of the hour. Cuts and bruises are the reward of those who are less skilful, and now and again some of the excited cattle charge into the on-lookers, and send a few of them flying. The sport has been prohibited on more than one occasion. But, seeing that no one need run any risks unless he chooses, existing official opinion inclines to the view that it is a pity to discourage a manly amusement which is not really more dangerous than football, steeple-chasing, or fox-hunting. The keenness

of the more virile sections of the community, especially the Kallans (*q.v.*), in this game is extraordinary, and, in many villages, cattle are bred and reared specially for it. The best jallikats are to be seen in the Kallan country in Tirumangalam, and next come those in Mēlur and Madura taluks."

"Boomerangs," Dr. G. Oppert writes,* "are used by the Maravans and Kallans when hunting deer. The Madras Museum collection contains three (two ivory, one wooden) from the Tanjore armoury. In the arsenal of the Pudukōttai Rāja a stock of wooden boomerangs is always kept. Their name in Tamil is valai tade (bent stick)." To Mr. R. Bruce Foote, I am indebted for the following note on the use of the boomerang in the Madura district. "A very favourite weapon of the Madura country is a kind of curved throwing-stick, having a general likeness to the boomerang of the Australian aborigines. I have in my collection two of these Maravar weapons obtained from near Sivaganga. The larger measures $24\frac{1}{8}''$ along the outer curve, and the chord of the arc $17\frac{5}{8}''$. At the handle end is a rather ovate knob $2\frac{1}{4}''$ long and $1\frac{1}{4}''$ in its maximum thickness. The thinnest and smallest part of the weapon is just beyond the knob, and measures $\frac{11}{16}''$ in diameter by $1\frac{1}{8}''$ in width. From that point onwards its width increases very gradually to the distal end, where it measures $2\frac{3}{8}''$ across and is squarely truncated. The lateral diameter is greatest three or four inches before the truncated end, where it measures $1''$. My second specimen is a little smaller than the above, and is also rather less curved. Both are made of hard heavy wood, dark reddish brown in colour as seen through the

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* Madras Journ. Lit. Science, XXV.

varnish covering the surface. The wood is said to be tamarind root. The workmanship is rather rude. I had an opportunity of seeing these boomerangs in use near Sivaganga in March, 1883. In the morning I came across many parties, small and large, of men and big boys who were out hare-hunting with a few dogs. The parties straggled over the ground, which was sparsely covered with low scrub jungle. And, whenever an unlucky hare started out near to the hunters, it was greeted with a volley of the boomerangs, so strongly and dexterously thrown that poor puss had little chance of escape. I saw several knocked out of time. On making enquiries as to these hunting parties, I was told that they were in observance of a semi-religious duty, in which every Maravar male, not unfitted by age or ill-health, is bound to participate on a particular day in the year. Whether a dexterous Maravar thrower could make his weapon return to him I could not find out. Certainly in none of the throws observed by me was any tendency to a return perceptible. But for simple straight shots these boomerangs answer admirably."

The Maravans bear Saivite sectarian marks, but also worship various minor deities, among whom are included Kāli, Karuppan, Muthu Karuppan, Periya Karuppan, Mathurai Vīran, Aiyanar, and Mūnuswāmi.

The lobes of the ears of Marava females are very elongated as the result of boring and gradual dilatation during childhood. Mr. (now Sir) F. A. Nicholson, who was some years ago stationed at Ramnād, tells me that the young Maravan princesses used to come and play in his garden, and, as they ran races, hung on to their ears, lest the heavy ornaments should rend asunder the filamentous ear lobes.

It was recorded, in 1902, that a young Maravan, who was a member of the family of the Zemindar of Chokampatti, was the first non-Christian Maravan to pass the B.A. degree examination at the Madras University.

The general title of the Maravans is Tēvan (god), but some style themselves Talaivan (chief), Sērvaikkāran (captain), Karaiyālan (ruler of the coast), or Rāyar-vamsam (Rāja's clan).

Mārayan.—A synonym of Mārān.

Māri.—Māri or Mārimanisaru is a sub-division of Holeya.

Māriyan.—Said to be a sub-division of Kōlayān.

Markandēya.—A gōtra of Padma Sālē and Sēniyan (Dēvānga), named after the rishi or sage Markandēya, who was remarkable for his austerities and great age, and is also known as Dīrghāyus (the long-lived). Some Dēvāngas and the Sālāpus claim him as their ancestor.

Marri (*Ficus bengalensis*).—An exogamous sept of Māla and Mutrācha. Marri-gunta (pond near a fig tree) occurs as an exogamous sept of Yānādi.

Marumakkathāyam.—The Malayālam name for the law of inheritance through the female line.

Marvāri.—A territorial name, meaning a native of Marwar. At times of census, Marvāri has been returned as a caste of Jains, *i.e.*, Marvāris, who are Jains by religion. The Marvāris are enterprising traders, who have settled in various parts of Southern India, and are, in the city of Madras, money-lenders.

Māsādika.—A synonym for Nādava Bant.

Māsila (māsi, dirt).—An exogamous sept of Dēvānga.

Masthān.—A Muhammadan title, meaning a saint, returned at times of census.

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